

Simon Trees

Solicitor

230898

[Agreement Date: 28 September 2022](#)

Decision - Agreement

Outcome: Regulatory settlement agreement

Outcome date: 28 September 2022

Published date: 1 November 2022

Firm details

Firm or organisation at date of publication and at time of matters giving rise to outcome

Name: Knights Professional Services Limited

Address(es): 34 Pocklingtons Walk, Leicester LE1 6BU

Firm ID: 620595

Outcome details

This outcome was reached by agreement.

Reasons/basis

1. Agreed outcome

1.1 Mr Trees, a solicitor, agrees to the following outcome to the investigation of his conduct by the Solicitors Regulation Authority Limited (SRA):

- a. he is fined £1700
- b. to the publication of this agreement
- c. he will pay the costs of the investigation of £300.

2. Summary of Facts

2.1 On 23 August 2021, Mr Trees pushed and grabbed the arm of another person during a brief altercation at his private residence.

2.2 He was subsequently charged with assault by beating.



2.3 On 23 March 2022 at Loughborough Magistrates' Court, Mr Trees pleaded guilty and was discharged conditionally for 24 months.

2.4 He was also ordered to pay:

- a. cost of £85 and
- b. a victim surcharge of £22.

2.5 On 25 August 2021, Mr Trees was stopped by the police while driving his car and was asked to provide a roadside sample of breath.

2.6 He was subsequently charged with driving a motor vehicle with an alcohol level over the prescribed limit.

2.7 On 17 September 2021 at Loughborough Magistrates' Court, Mr Trees pleaded guilty and was:

- a. disqualified from driving for 23 months to be reduced by 23 weeks on completion of a course approved by the secretary of state and
- b. fined £1730.

2.8 He was also ordered to pay:

- a. costs of £85 and
- b. a victim surcharge of £173.

2.9 Mr Trees promptly notified the SRA of his convictions.

3. Admissions

3.1 Mr Trees admits, and the SRA accepts, that by virtue of his conduct and convictions he failed to behave in a way which upholds public trust and confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons in breach of Principle 2 of the SRA Principles.

4. Why the agreed outcome is appropriate

4.1 The SRA's Enforcement Strategy sets out its approach to the use of its enforcement powers where there has been a failure to meet its standards or requirements. Its topic guides for 'driving with excess alcohol convictions' and 'criminal offences outside of practice' also provide insight on the approach to enforcement and indicative sanctions guidelines.

4.2 When considering the appropriate sanctions and controls in this matter, the SRA has taken into account the admissions made by Mr Trees and the following mitigation which he has put forward:

- a. there was no lasting harm caused to persons or property in either incident



- b. he promptly reported his convictions to the SRA, and cooperated with its investigation
- c. he has shown insight and remorse for his actions
- d. he has completed the driving course.

4.3 The SRA consider a fine is the appropriate outcome because:

- a. a public sanction is required to uphold public confidence in the delivery of legal services
- b. a fine is appropriate to uphold professional standards and uphold public confidence in the solicitors' profession and in legal services provided by authorised persons because of the seriousness of his conduct
- c. any lesser sanction would not provide a credible deterrent to Mr Trees and others.

5. Publication

5.1 The SRA considers it appropriate that this agreement is published in the interests of transparency in the regulatory and disciplinary process. Mr Trees agrees to the publication of this agreement.

6. Acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement

6.1 Mr Trees agrees that he will not deny the admissions made in this agreement or act in any way which is inconsistent with it.

6.2 If Mr Trees denies the admissions or acts in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement, the conduct which is subject to this agreement may be considered further by the SRA. That may result in a disciplinary outcome or a referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal on the original facts and allegations.

6.3 Denying the admissions made or acting in a way which is inconsistent with this agreement may also constitute a separate breach of principles 2 and 5 of the Principles, and paragraph 7.3 of the Code of Conduct for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs.

7. Costs

7.1 Mr Trees agrees to pay the costs of the SRA's investigation in the sum of £300. Such costs are due within 28 days of a 'statement of costs due' being issued by the SRA.

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